

Community Connection

U.S. 30

Environmental Impact Statement
and Phase I Design Report

Newsletter – Issue I – Fall 2007

GREETINGS FROM GEORGE RYAN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS / REGION 2 ENGINEER



George Ryan, Deputy Director/
Region 2 Engineer

Welcome to the first issue of the US 30 Community Connection newsletter, a quarterly publication designed to keep the communities and region updated and informed about the progress of the project as well as the many ways for you to get involved.

As you may now know, the District completed a corridor feasibility study in 2006 to determine if transportation enhancements were necessary to meet the growth and travel demands projected within the northern area of Illinois. As a result of the study's preliminary

findings the federal highway has approved our efforts to continue through the next phase, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Phase I Design Report.

Results from this engineering and environmental evaluation process will make it possible for the department to move into the next phases, Phase II - Final Design/ Construction Bid Documents and Phase III Construction, provided funds become available.

This is an exciting yet sensitive time for all that are involved and concerned with what we foresee being an improved transportation system in the area. In an effort to adhere to Federal and State guidelines, the Department has formed a committee called the Project Study Group (PSG) to oversee the entire planning and design process. In addition to engineering and planning responsibilities for the project, the group is responsible for coordinating with various advisory groups to solicit community input and keep the public informed as the project progresses.

I know from comments gathered at the Public Information Open House held in Morrison on July 25, 2007 that there is considerable concern regarding the potential environmental and property impacts. We understand the importance of your concerns and through the various forms of advisory groups your comments will be factored into the overall evaluation process as the project moves forward.

In this issue you will gain a better understanding of the time line, policies, procedures, and processes of the US 30 project as well as how to "GET INVOLVED" so that your input is taken into consideration. Our goal is to partner with you so that we can all be proud of the transportation improvements that evolve as a result of our combined efforts.

This publication is dedicated to keeping the community informed about the US 30 Environmental Impact Statement and Phase I Design Report.

In This Issue:

- Why this study is needed
- Project Scope
- Limits of the Project
- Project Schedule
- Context Sensitive Solutions
- Public Involvement
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

We appreciate your input and support throughout this entire project, so please.....

"Get Involved – Stay Involved!"



Illinois Department of Transportation

Why this study is needed

The improvement to the transportation system within Whiteside County from east of Fulton to Rock Falls is necessary to address traffic safety and mobility issues that currently exist in this area. This study will evaluate numerous roadway alternatives and will be balanced with the input of stakeholders including farmers, residents, business owners, and users of the route. Based on our outreach activities so far, we have received positive feedback indicating that many residents are pleased with IDOT's goal to improve safety and mobility. In addition, several business owners have stated that they see roadway improvements having a positive impact on the region's economic vitality. We have also heard concerns from stakeholders about various potential impacts to farms, businesses, residents, environmentally sensitive areas, and urbanized areas along the project route.



What is the scope of this project?

The main purpose of this project is to improve the transportation system between Rock Falls and Fulton in order to facilitate safe and efficient traffic flow in this region. In order to achieve this goal, we anticipate that the proposed roadway will require additional lanes, and may also be on a different alignment than it is today. This might include rerouting US 30 around Morrison. Due to the significant size of the project study area, there are many social, economic, and environmental issues to address during the development of alternative roadway solutions. As a part of this development process, IDOT is implementing a Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) approach to public involvement. CSS guidelines have been established by IDOT in order to ensure a high level of public involvement in the study process for major projects such as the US 30 Corridor.



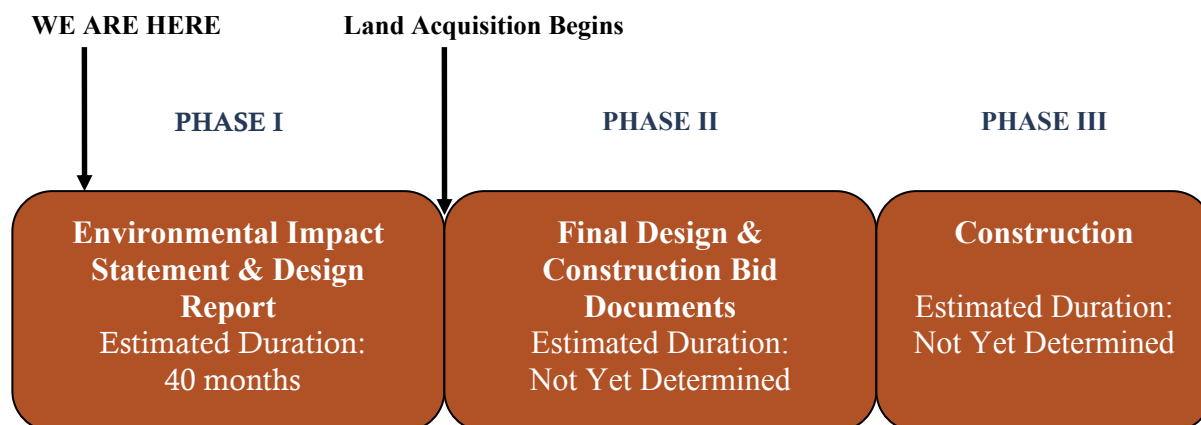
What are the limits of this project?

The project study area is in Whiteside County and extends from east of Fulton to Rock Falls. The study limits extend from just west of the U.S. 30/IL 136 intersection to the U.S. 30/IL 40 intersection in Rock Falls. During the process of this study, we will thoroughly review traffic, safety, and environmental issues within the study area in order to develop various alternatives for the improvement of US 30.

What is the project schedule? When will construction begin?

IDOT utilizes a three-phase process to plan, design, and construct projects. For this project, Phase I consists of the development of an Environmental Impact Statement and Design Report. This phase was started in July of 2007, and our goal is to complete Phase I within 40 months. After Phase I has been completed, the process of purchasing land for the project can begin. Phase II is the preparation of the final design and construction bid documents, and Phase III is the actual construction of the project. Funding for these future phases, including land acquisition, Phase II and Phase III is not currently available.

US Route 30 Project Time line



Context Sensitive Solutions

The focus of the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process is to involve the public in the process of developing alternatives for the project. Context Sensitive Solutions is defined as:

“An interdisciplinary approach that seeks effective multimodal transportation solutions by working with stakeholders to develop, build and maintain cost-effective transportation facilities which fit into and reflect the project’s surrounding – its ‘context’.”

Put simply, the use of CSS means that IDOT will be working with the community as a whole to develop a solution to the congestion and safety problems currently associated with US 30. As a part of the CSS process, a Project Study Group (PSG) has been developed that is comprised of individuals from IDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the engineering consultant team. The PSG needs to hear from the public to understand the concerns and priorities of the community. Alternative designs can then be developed with these concerns in mind.

For more information on IDOT’s Context Sensitive Solutions guidelines, please visit their web site at:
<http://www.dot.il.gov/css/home.html>



Public Involvement 101

IDOT's public involvement effort for this project will be conducted in three steps:

1. The first step will be to reach out to as many stakeholders as possible to identify concerns and needs for the project. From this input and the engineering and environmental studies, the PSG will develop a formal purpose for the project. This purpose will address safety, mobility (IDOT's concerns) and concerns submitted by the public at-large.
2. After the purpose for the project has been established, the PSG will develop alternatives. These alternatives will focus on improving mobility and safety balanced with the needs of the community and environment. These alternatives will then be presented to the public for feedback.
3. Based on the feedback received during step two, the PSG will select an alternative that best meets the purpose and need of the project, reflecting the needs of the community and the environment as much as possible. This solution will be presented to the public for additional feedback and further refinement.

Where are we in the public involvement process?

The PSG is currently in Step 1 of the public involvement process. The effort to date has been focused on informing as many people as possible about the project. One of the ways we accomplished this goal was to build a list of property owners throughout the study area. This list was then utilized to send mailings to interested parties and to keep people informed about the project. In addition, members of the PSG have been meeting with businesses, organizations, communities and governmental leaders along the corridor in order to keep them involved in and informed about the project. Based on input received during our public involvement process to date, we have developed a list of frequently asked questions and answers which may be found on the project web site (please see the Contact Information on page 7 of this newsletter for the web address).



Dawn Perkins (IDOT-Project Liaison), Presenting to CAG members

A major part of the CSS process for this project is the Community Advisory Group (CAG). The CAG consists of stakeholders that represent farmers, residents, government officials, business leaders and special interest groups. Throughout this project the CAG members will participate in meetings that focus on the issues that most concern the community in the study of improvements to US 30. These meetings will continue throughout Phase I and into Phase II.



Public Involvement

Two critical steps of the CSS process have been completed to date: the first Public Information Open House and the first Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting.

Public Information Meeting

IDOT held a Public Information Open House on July 25, 2007 at the Odell Community Center/Public Library in Morrison. Two hundred and fifty-three people attended the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information about this phase of the project and to explain how citizens can "Get Involved" as stakeholders in the project. A majority of the comments received at the meeting were in regards to: economic development, preservation of agricultural ground, conservation of environmental resources, and utilizing the existing U.S. 30 roadway.



Consultants interact with attendees at Public Information Meeting.

Mike Walton (Volkert & Associates, Inc.)



Gil Janes and Jon Estrem (Howard R. Green Company)

IDOT and Consultants interact with CAG members.



Dawn Perkins (IDOT-Project Liaison)
and Mike Walton (Volkert & Associates, Inc.)



Jon Estrem (Howard R. Green Company)

Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting

The first CAG meeting was held on September 12, 2007 at the Odell Community Center/Public Library in Morrison. Approximately thirty CAG members participated in the meeting. The members consist of stakeholders that represent farmers, residents, government officials, business leaders and special interest groups. The focus of the meeting was two-fold. The first aspect was to identify the key issues associated with this project and establish the context of the communities within the project area. The key issues that were identified were socioeconomic, agriculture, safety, access, and roadway characteristics. The second aspect was to develop a "problem statement" which states the key issues in a concise manner. The CAG members developed a number of problem statements which will be taken to the Project Study Group for review and approval. It will then be presented at the next CAG meeting for consensus and published in the next newsletter.

The next Community Advisory Group Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 17, 2007 at the Odell Community Center in Morrison, Illinois from 6:30pm - 8:30pm.



Frequently Asked Questions:

The Project Study Group Responds To Your Questions

HOW MUCH TIME WILL PHASE I REQUIRE?

It is anticipated that the Environmental Impact Statement and Phase I Design Report will be completed in 2010.

IS FUNDING SECURED TO SUPPORT THE PROJECT THROUGH CONSTRUCTION?

Funding has only been secured to finance Phase I. Efforts are underway to determine strategies for securing funds through the next phase, Phase II Final Design/Construction Bid Documents.

WHEN WILL YOU BEGIN IDENTIFYING PROPERTIES THAT MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE PROJECT?

Potential alternatives will be shown to the public as they are developed. Impacted property owners will be contacted individually when a recommended alternative has been chosen.

WHEN WILL LAND ACQUISITION OCCUR?

The Department can begin acquiring right-of-way after the Environmental Impact Statement and Phase I Design Report are approved and funding for right-of-way has been secured.

HOW IS THE AMOUNT OF RIGHT-OF-WAY DETERMINED?

The amount of right-of-way is set on the basis of what is needed to provide a safe and functional highway for the traveling public.

WHO DETERMINES HOW MUCH COMPENSATION I WILL RECEIVE FOR THE PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY THAT THE DEPARTMENT WILL ACQUIRE WITH THE PROJECT AND HOW IS IT CIRCULATED?

The Department will have an appraisal prepared on your property to determine fair market value either by an IDOT Staff Appraiser or a private Appraiser hired by the Department. They will determine the value of the area being purchased from you and any damage to the remaining parcel. If the whole property is being acquired then additional relocation assistance will be provided by the Department.

I BELIEVE MY HOME/FARMSTEAD IS HISTORIC, THEREFORE THE STATE CANNOT TOUCH IT, RIGHT?

The State can acquire property from a historic home/farmstead. The State will conduct a historic survey of the project area and will receive a determination from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) stating which structures have historical context. It is possible that we will acquire some right-of-way from the properties, but we will make every effort to avoid these structures.

WILL BIKE PATHS BE PROVIDED?

Providing bike paths will be a part of the Phase I Study. The Department will be working with local bicycle organizations to discuss bike and pedestrian paths.



Upcoming Public Involvement Activities

Additional meetings will be held with local organizations to keep them updated on the progress throughout the study. If you are part of an organization that may be interested in a project briefing, please contact Shelia Hudson at the project hotline (1- 866- ROUTE30) to schedule a date and time.

Contact Information

You may submit questions or comments about this project by writing to us at:
US 30 Joint Venture Team
c/o Volkert and Associates, Inc.
103 Lanter Court,
Collinsville, IL 62234

Or you may submit questions or comments on the project website:
<http://www.dot.il.gov/us30/default.html>

Or you may call the project hotline:
1-866-ROUTE30 (1-866-768-8330)

Project Study Team

Lead Agencies

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)

Consultant Team

Volkert & Associates, Inc.
Project Management Consultant
(Joint Venture)

Howard R. Green Company
Project Management Consultant
(Joint Venture)

Goodpaster-Jamison, Inc.
Environmental Consultant

Hudson and Associates, LLC
Context Sensitive Solutions/
Public Involvement Consultant

Kaskaskia Engineering Group
GIS/Mapping Consultant

Request Publication

Newsletters such as this one will be published on approximately a quarterly basis. If you or someone you know wants to be added to our mailing list, please visit the project website or complete the following form and mail it to:

US 30 Joint Venture Team
c/o Volkert and Associates, Inc.
103 Lanter Court,
Collinsville, IL 62234

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____
Zip _____
Email _____



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